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# THE KINGDOM OF COINS.



BRADLEY GILMAN



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# THE KINGDOM OF COINS







"Tommy found himself walking beside him down the road, with Jock dangling from one hand and the penny tightly clasped in the other." — Page 12.

THE  
KINGDOM OF COINS  
AND  
THE QUEER PEOPLE WHO LIVED THERE

By BRADLEY GILMAN

AUTHOR OF "THE MUSICAL JOURNEY OF DOROTHY AND DELIA"

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK T. MERRILL



THE TURNKEY

BOSTON  
ROBERTS BROTHERS

1894

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## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

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THE fixed law of human growth is that fancies shall precede facts; and this little story aims at imparting to children and young people certain quaint fancies regarding money,—gold and silver coins,—which shall pleasantly hint at the hard facts of earning and spending, as these present themselves later in life.

BRADLEY GILMAN.



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# THE KINGDOM OF COINS.

## CHAPTER I.

### TOMMY AND MR. MIDAS.



LITTLE TOMMY sat on the doorsteps before his house one summer's day, and the hot sun streamed down over him in a flood. Tommy was very glad, however, to be so warm, for he was just recovering from a long illness, and was so pale and thin that the sun seemed only to put life and strength into him, and to do him no harm whatever. The little boy was

"There sat Tommy, and held Jock hanging by an arm. In his other hand was a penny."

dressed in a suit of blue clothes just like those of a sailor, with anchors of white braid on the shoulders, with a large embroidered collar, and with trousers very wide at the bottom. On his head was a wide-brimmed straw hat, which surely was very unlike a sailor's hat. Tommy, however, was not a real sailor, though there was no knowing what he might be later in life; as yet he had not launched his bark for a voyage of his own, but had been only towed along in the wake of larger craft. In one chubby hand was carried a doll-like figure, knitted from yarn, stuffed with bran, and adorned with fierce mustachios like a Spanish cavalier. This was Jock, — Tommy's constant companion. He did not like the word "doll," — for "*only girls carry dolls.*" This was always said by the young man with great scorn.

Tommy and Jock were bosom companions. They were similar in tastes, and one in sex, so that the relationship was lofty and Platonic in character. Tommy confided all his woes — which were many — to Jock, and Jock never betrayed his confidence. There were hours and even days of neglect on Tommy's part.

during which Jock lay forgotten in some obscure corner; but always, when the reunion came, Jock was forgetful of past neglect, and his mustachios shone as fiercely as ever.

There in the sunlight sat Tommy, and held Jock, hanging by an arm, over the edge of the doorstep. Jock, for his part, was satisfied,—glad that he hung right side up by an arm, instead of upside down by a leg, and glad also that his arm was so strong. In Tommy's other hand was a penny. His mother had given it to him a short time before, and he had planned a journey to the candy-shop, not far away; but he was undecided, as he gazed first at the penny and then at the hot, dusty road, and Jock had no advice to offer.

Thus the little boy sat on the doorstep, in a state of indecision; and, the better to solve his problem, he closed his eyes for a few moments; then, as he pondered over the heated road and the sweetness of the candy at the shop, his curly head with its broad-brimmed hat began to nod and nod, and presently inclined itself gently against the doorway, and — and *then*, — Tommy suddenly saw the strangest sight you can imagine.

The front gate was about twenty feet distant; and standing there, facing toward him, Tommy saw a very queer-looking person. It was the figure of a man, but of a man not a foot taller than himself. He wore a loose red blouse, and loose green trousers tucked into very high boots,—that is to say, of course, the boots were high for *him*. On his head he wore a tall red hat that was shaped like a horn-of-plenty; and under this queer hat looked out a jolly red face and twinkling black eyes. In his hand he carried a long cane or staff, from which hung a number of little bells, shaped like morning-glories, which were golden in color and tinkled softly as the staff was moved.

It was all so unexpected by Tommy that he knew not what to do or say; and as he looked, the little man had taken off his pointed red hat and was beckoning to him, smiling meanwhile in the kindest way in the world. Tommy was very much confused by it all at first; but as he looked and looked, the little man seemed so kindly that he had no fear of him, and after that, almost without knowing how it had come about, Tommy found himself walking beside him down the

road, with Jock dangling from one hand and the penny tightly clasped in the other.

The road seemed not nearly so hot as Tommy had feared, and he had no difficulty in keeping pace with his queer companion, because the legs of the little red and blue man were hardly longer than his own.

“What have you in your hand?” asked the little man, presently, speaking in a soft, gentle tone.

He looked straight before him, as he spoke, and did not appear to notice Tommy; so that Tommy was obliged to make a reply, instead of holding up his possessions in silence, which he would have preferred doing. “Jock and a penny, if you please,—if you please,—sir,” answered Tommy, in some doubt as to just the proper way to address so strange a person.

“Ah yes! ah yes, yes!” said the little red and blue man, still looking intently before him.

Nothing more was said for several moments, and the two walked steadily along beside each other. Then the little man smiled very sweetly, still keeping his eyes forward, shook the bells on his staff

until they tinkled right merrily, and asked, "How would you like to visit the place from which all the pennies and other coins come?"

"Oh, I'd like it very much, I'm sure," answered Tommy, quickly.

"Very well," continued the other, nodding his head with its red cap pleasantly, "very well, then you shall go with me. You shall visit the Kingdom of Coins. That is my home. And you may call me by my name, too, if you wish."

"Thank you," said Tommy, and he waited to hear what the little man's name was; but the other said nothing.

"If you please, sir, what name shall I call you?" inquired Tommy, after they had walked a short distance.

"Oh! ah! yes, yes! Why, I did n't tell you, did I? I am so forgetful; but then I am so very old too! You could hardly expect a person who is over two thousand years old to have a good memory, could you?" Thereupon he laughed very heartily, and again quite forgot to answer Tommy's question.

“If you please, sir, what is your name?” asked Tommy again.

“Oh! ah! yes! ha, ha! Midas, Midas. My name is Midas; you may call me Mr. Midas, if you like.” And again he fell to laughing, even more loudly than before.

Tommy pondered a few moments, and then inquired very earnestly, “And are you really over two thousand years old, Mr. — Mr. Midas?”

“Indeed, I am,” replied Mr. Midas. “I am nearly two thousand two hundred and seventeen years old. My twenty-two hundred and seventeenth birthday will come next month. You must know about it, Tommy; it is this way: I was born in —”

Just then Mr. Midas paused, looked about him, and turned aside from the road, drawing Tommy gently with him. “Here we are at the entrance of the Kingdom of Coins. I will tell you about my history at some other time. But, stay a moment! You can read about it; it is all written down in the stories of Greek mythology, — that is, all my early life, all they knew about me. I’ve changed much since then;

and for the better I hope." Here he smiled and chuckled and looked at Tommy, and Tommy could hardly keep from laughing himself; but he refrained, for he thought it might seem disrespectful to laugh at so aged a person.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM OF COINS.



NEW object of wonder now presented itself to Tommy's eyes. Mr. Midas had drawn him aside from the road, just where it skirted the edge of a hill. Tommy had passed this way many times before, but had never seen the remarkable sight he now gazed upon. Here in the side of the hill, in front of Mr. Midas and himself, was a door

"Mr. Midas seized the heavy knocker and gave a great banging blow."

as high as a man's head, and made, apparently, of highly polished brass. Mr. Midas seized the heavy knocker, which he was barely able to reach, and gave a great banging blow. As they waited for the door to be opened, Tommy had leisure to examine it carefully. It shone so brightly that it almost dazzled him. As he reached out his hand to touch its smooth surface, Mr. Midas caught up the hand quickly, examined it a moment, and then let it fall again, saying, "Very good! There is n't anything sticky on it, — any candy or the like, — so you can touch the door if you wish; only don't keep your fingers on it long, for that tarnishes it, and Bad-Penny would be angry."

"Bad-Penny?" asked Tommy, forgetting in his surprise to touch the door; "who is Bad-Penny, please?"

Mr. Midas smiled upon the little boy, reached up and gave another blow with the knocker, and said: "Bad-Penny is our porter and messenger; he'll be here in a moment to let us in. He's very particular about his door, and does n't wish to see it soiled. You might not get in if he noticed any marks from your hand." Here he reached up and gave another blow on the

door, and then resumed: "Bad-Penny is n't good for much except to run errands and do the lightest kind of work. He never fully got his growth; if he had, he would n't be a penny at all."

Here he looked at Tommy wisely, and the little boy felt that he ought to say something, but knew not what; and while he was thinking, Mr. Midas continued: "You see, in our country — the Kingdom of Coins — pennies grow to be pounds; and it happens in this way; namely, because the pennies are our children, and every one has an interest in children; so that this interest, if long continued, will change a penny into a pound. Now, here is Bad-Penny! Nobody took much interest in him because he was bad, and the result is he has grown but little, and has always remained a penny. We could n't find any fit work for him for a long time, but now he's in his right place. Our other door-keeper was very apt to fall asleep or to wander away and not be at hand when needed; but Bad-Penny is — Ah, there he comes now! I can hear him. I feared I must ring again. I often ring many times; but he always comes sooner or later. Yes, Bad-Penny

always turns up. Perhaps you may have heard that expression, 'A bad penny always turns up.' It comes from us."

The little boy was about to shake his head in the negative, when a rattling, as of bolts, was heard on the other side of the door; then it began to swing slowly open, and as it swung, there came into view the queerest creature Tommy had ever seen. He was much queerer than Mr. Midas. It was easy to see why he was called "Bad-Penny," or, at least, easy to see why he was called a "Penny" at all; for he was nothing but a round, penny-shaped creature, with legs and arms like slender sticks or pipe-stems, similar to those given by Tommy to the men he drew on his slate. Mr. Midas greeted the strange being familiarly, and was about to enter; but Bad-Penny pushed him back until he had carefully examined the outer surface of the door. Then, finding it untarnished, he stood aside and allowed Tommy and the little man to enter.

As soon as the two were fairly within, the door closed behind them with a loud clang, though how



“There came into view the queerest creature Tommy had ever seen. It was easy to see why he was called ‘Bad-Penny.’” — *Page 20.*

Bad-Penny, with his slender arms, ever did it, Tommy was puzzled to fancy. For a few minutes the darkness was very dense; but the little boy's eyes became quickly adjusted to it, and he saw, by a dim light at a distance, that he was in a gallery or corridor cut through the solid rock. His companion now took his hand and led him carefully along, while Bad-Penny followed them a short distance, and then disappeared in a side gallery.

“We are now entering the Kingdom of Coins,” said Mr. Midas, “and you need not fear any harm. We are coming now to a better-lighted part of the corridor. You see the lights just ahead? Those are coins of unusual purity and brilliancy, and we make them serve as lights for us. We tried them nearer the door, but the outer air discolours them; and Bad-Penny, who polishes them, said he would not—he would *not* be responsible for them.”

Tommy had been somewhat frightened in the darkness; but now, coming to the light, and seeing Mr. Midas looking at him as pleasantly as ever, he took new heart, held fast to Mr. Midas with one hand,

clutched Jock tightly with the other, and looked about him with great curiosity. The lights were scattered along the sides and top of the gallery as thickly as fireflies in a meadow.

As they proceeded, Tommy was greatly delighted at the charming sight of the colors, and he noticed that some of the lights were a dull yellow, others were of a blue tint and very intense, while still others were of a rich, lustrous golden hue. Mr. Midas kindly explained to him that the dull lights, which were the most numerous, were copper coins; the intense blue-tinted ones were silver, and the lustrous yellow ones were golden. "We once made them much larger than we do now," said he; and his voice grew a little sad as he spoke. "Before the days of bank-bills and notes and drafts and all those wretched inventions, we were a busier people than now."

Then he paused, and there seemed to come over him just such a mood of forgetfulness as Tommy had noticed in him once or twice before. Tommy felt a little lonely and timid for a moment, and clutched

Jock a bit tighter. "Ah yes!" murmured Mr. Midas, recovering himself, "ah, yes! those were glorious days." Then he turned suddenly toward Tommy. "Why, do you know, in those days we made the stars and the moon and the sun. We did, indeed. It was our people that made them. The moon is a great silver coin that was hung up in the sky by one of our workmen. He carried it to the top of a high mountain and threw it up against the sky. Afterward we did the same with a fine gold coin we made, and that became the sun. Haven't you ever heard, now, — have n't you ever heard people speak of "the silver moon"? And often they speak of "the golden rays" of the sun. So you see people really know what the sun and moon are made of, though they may not directly admit it."

Tommy was so interested and surprised that he answered nothing for several minutes, and the two walked along in silence. Mr. Midas seemed a good deal depressed; he shook his head sadly, and his look was bent upon the ground. "Have n't you noticed

the spots on the moon?" he inquired; and without waiting for a reply he continued in a mournful tone: "They are getting darker and darker, and are spreading; you just notice them the next time there is a full moon! We're not allowed to rub them off any more. And there are some, too, on the sun. But there! there! we mustn't complain."

Presently the little boy broke the silence. "If you please, Mr. Midas, how did the *stars* come?"

"My dear child," said the queer little man, clearing his throat and shaking his staff and bells vigorously,— "my dear child, the stars are filings and bits of clippings from our silver coins. They are blown up from our chimneys, and are scattered over the sky. They are of all shapes, and are not firmly fastened on; so that, when the wind blows, they shake about, and people call it "twinkling." Here we are, though, at the end of the corridor. I will now show you the great central hall of the Kingdom of Coins; and you must keep very close to me, for there are many people busy in this place, and as they are all crea-

tures of metal, you must not get in their way; you might be sadly bruised."

Tommy nodded assent, but in an absent sort of way, for already the glare and din of the great central hall were assailing his eyes and ears.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CENTRAL HALL: THE PENNIES.



“He found himself standing before a huge image or statue, seated upon a throne.”

WHEN they reached the edge of the hall into which the corridor opened directly, Mr. Midas did not pause, but saying, “Now keep fast hold of my hand,” hurried Tommy at once across the hall, which was like a cave, and brought him in safety to the other side. The little boy

was so confused by the noise and the queer people moving rapidly all about him, that he kept his eyes closed during most of the perilous passage. When he felt his companion stop, he opened them again, and found himself standing before a huge image or statue, seated upon a throne. This statue was made in the form of a man, and was composed of many, many pieces, which shone like burnished gold. It seemed to be made of thousands of joints, and yet it sat quite erect, with great dignity. While Tommy stood in unspeakable amazement before this grand figure, Mr. Midas explained that it was their king. "We have two classes of people here, as you will presently see," said he, — "the children and the grown people; the children are called 'Pennies,' and the grown people are called 'Pounds.' The Pennies have very little to do except to amuse themselves; for the work is all done by the Pounds. Now this king was once a Pound; but when he was chosen to reign over us he at once necessarily became a Sovereign. As for these joints, they are the signs by which we know that he is fitted to be our ruler; for we are a mon-

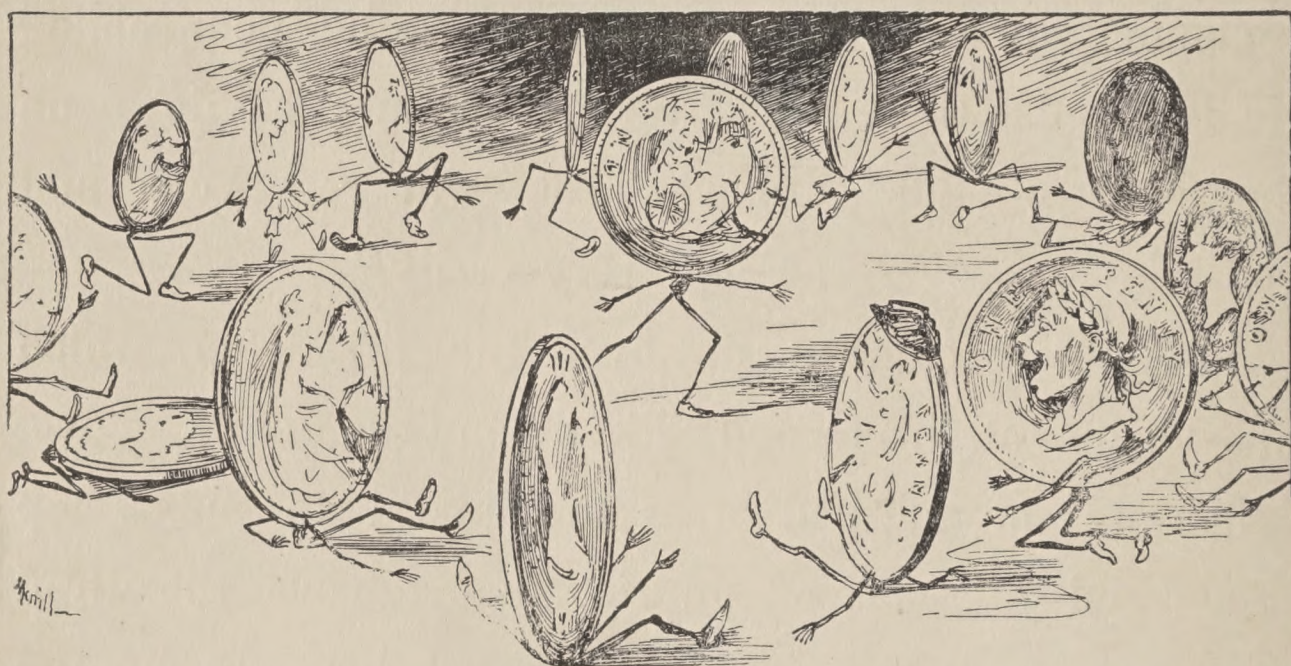
archy only in name, and choose only such a king as will bow easily to the will of the people."

Tommy's poor little legs were beginning to feel weary, and he must have pulled pretty heavily upon his companion's hand; for Mr. Midas checked himself and exclaimed in a pitying tone: "Why, the poor child! He is tired; there, now, turn about and sit down on the steps of this throne! That will rest you; and you can look over the hall very easily."

So Tommy climbed up over the first step, which was made of iron, and sat upon the next above, which was of polished brass or copper; the next step above and last was of purest silver. Thus the tired child sat on the copper step, rested his feet on the iron step, and leaned his back against the silver step; then he directed his gaze about the hall.

This hall was like a vast cavern hewn in the solid rock. The roof was lofty, and from it and the sides twinkled and glowed and blazed light-giving coins of copper and silver and gold. There was a great deal going on throughout the hall, so much indeed that for a few moments Tommy really could distinguish

nothing. Then his attention became drawn to a group of creatures directly in front of him engaged in some kind of game. At once he discerned that they were Pennies; for they closely resembled Bad-Penny, the



“His attention became drawn to a group of creatures engaged in some kind of game. At once he discerned that they were Pennies.”

porter. They had the same shape; their bodies were round, like a penny, and their arms and legs were thin, like sticks; their faces were at the upper edge of their bodies, and they had no necks whatever. Tommy involuntarily sighed with envy, reflecting that they had n't to fuss over collars and ties. As he lifted Jock up

so that he too might share in the odd spectacle, the Pennies began seating themselves upon the floor of the hall in a circle, and were evidently about to begin a new game.

“Now, Jock,” whispered Tommy to his bosom friend, “let’s watch and learn the game, so that we can play it ourselves.”

Jock’s mustachios seemed to curl even more fiercely as he stared straight before him ; Mr. Midas was leaning his head on his staff, in a meditative way ; and Tommy had now lost nearly all his fear and weariness.

The Pennies, being seated upon the floor of the hall in a circle, joined hands ; then a Penny, who had been left out of the number, jumped into the midst of the ring, and began running about, from one part to another, watching very closely. The Pennies on the floor, for their part, kept perfectly still. Suddenly something flashed and glittered in the hands of one of the Pennies ; but with a leap and a bound the watchful Penny was at the spot. He grasped at the glittering object, and after a brief

struggle captured it; but as he looked at it more closely, a laugh went up from all the Pennies in the circle, and he threw the object away in disgust, and resumed his eager watching.

This was repeated again and again. Indeed, it seemed to be the whole of the game. Tommy could not make very much out of it; but Mr. Midas, rousing himself, leaned forward and explained that the game was called "All that glitters is not gold."

Tommy had often heard his grandmother say those words as she rocked softly back and forth in her arm-chair, and he now resolved to recollect this game and tell her about it.

"That is a game which we encourage the Pennies to play," remarked Mr. Midas.

"They seem to like it," ventured Tommy.

"Yes, and it is good for them," added his companion. "It teaches them a great many things, and we insist upon their learning all they can. Most of the Pennies are quick and improve rapidly; but sometimes we have one who does very well as a Penny, but when he grows up into a Pound is rather deficient. That has



“ Mr. Midas explained that the game was called ‘ All that glitters is not gold.’ ” — *Page 32.*

given rise among us to the phrase, 'Penny-wise and Pound-foolish,' — an expression that has met with some favor among men and women, I believe."

The Pennies now ended their game as suddenly as they had begun it. They sprang up, making a clinking sound with their feet as they rose, and, again joining hands, began the gayest dance Tommy had ever witnessed. For music they had only their own voices; but they sang some words, which Tommy could not hear, to the familiar air of "Money Musk," and keeping time with their clinking feet they made such merry music that the little boy smiled with delight, and Mr. Midas waved his staff, tinkling the beautiful morning-glory bells in time with the dancers.

How long they danced Tommy did not know. The movements of the queer people were so graceful, and their voices so harmonious, that the time passed very quickly. Presently, however, they ceased their dancing, and, separating into little groups of three and four, began another song, and sauntered leisurely away toward the lower end of the hall. Tommy caught only the first few strains of this song, — it was "Sing

a song o' sixpence ;" — and it soon faded quite away in the distance.

At this point Tommy noticed a figure that he had seen standing near the dancing Pennies. He seemed to be a Penny himself, only he was not at all frivolous or sportive, but moved about in a grand and stately way. On his round flat body, just below the place where his chin should have been, was printed, "A PENNY EARNED." Luckily for Tommy, who was not out of his primer, the letters were very plainly printed, all in capitals, and he was able to make out the words ; but when he had done this, he was puzzled a little to explain them. He turned to ask Mr. Midas about the matter.

When he turned back again he was even more puzzled than before, for the same creature was standing there ; only, the words now read, "A PENNY SAVED."

Tommy was perfectly astonished ; but Mr. Midas said calmly, "Wait a moment !" And Tommy looked, when, like a flash, the figure whirled about, and there were the former words, "A PENNY EARNED."

Tommy looked at Mr. Midas, and Mr. Midas smiled in a peculiar way. "You see it's the same thing; he's the same Penny," said the little old man. "Do you think you can understand and remember the lesson?"

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CENTRAL HALL: THE POUNDS.



“The same creature was standing there; only, the words now read, ‘A Penny saved.’”

“A penny saved is a penny earned.”

Of course Tommy wished to do what Mr. Midas directed, and he began to say over and over again, “A penny earned is the same thing as a penny saved;” but the other heard him, and said, “Perhaps it would be easier to remember, and also more useful to you afterward, if you were to say it,

Tommy tried it this way, and it certainly was easier to remember, though as yet he did not understand it.

He was roused from his thoughts by a sound of clinking and clanking, like men with iron shoes walking. He at once raised his eyes to look about him, and Mr. Midas said, "Now is a good time to see the Pounds; they are going to their work in another hall."

The little boy was moved with curiosity to see the Pounds, because he had already heard about them. He expected to find them looking much like the Pennies, only larger; but, instead, they looked almost like gray ghosts,—that is, if there really be any ghosts at all, which I sometimes seriously question. They very likely may have been like the Pennies, underneath,—indeed, Mr. Midas afterward assured Tommy that they were,—but so far as their outer appearance was concerned, all that could be seen was a grayish garment or gown entirely covering them, except their arms and hands and their feet.

It was a strange sight, yet only one of many that the child had seen; and he was not so greatly amazed

as at first. Still, he stared very steadily at them for several minutes, and then turned to the kind friend at his side for the explanation which he knew would be ready.

“There! you have seen the Pounds,” said Mr. Midas. “I am very glad they chanced this way while we were in so good a position for viewing them. They are Pounds now, but once they were all Pennies. You would hardly suspect that those serious people were once careless, frivolous pennies; but they were. Once they needed care and instruction just as do the Pennies that you saw; but now they are models of faithfulness and industry. We have worked out this principle, have proved it, “If you take care of the pennies, the pounds will take care of themselves.”

Here Tommy happened to cast his glance down toward his feet, and he noticed that his penny—his own penny without arms and legs, which he had brought from home—had dropped upon the lowest step, the iron step of the throne. He at once stooped down and picked it up.

“Very good!” exclaimed Mr. Midas; “very good

indeed! And now what was I saying? Oh, I was telling you about the Pounds. I was on the point of explaining about their appearance. They wear those garments outside, but there is good gold underneath. Of course, if they were, underneath, only what they appear to be on the outside, they could n't walk or accomplish anything."

Tommy, in his eagerness to get a good view of the Pounds, had risen to his feet; now, in response to a sign from Mr. Midas, he sat down, and restored poor Jock — whom he had been holding upside down by one foot — to a vertical position; then he composed himself to hear what his quaint friend of the staff and bells was about to impart.

"You may have noticed," said Mr. Midas, speaking in a more leisurely way, — "you may have noticed that the Pounds were not talking with one another, but were bent on their various errands in entire silence."

"Yes, Mr. Midas," assented Tommy.

"I am very glad that you did, for that will help you to understand what I now am about to tell you."

Tommy and Jock were giving the closest attention.

“You must know, or rather, I may say, you surely can’t know,—which often comes to much the same thing,—you surely can’t know about the other kingdoms below this one, the kingdoms of iron and the rest.”

The little boy certainly had no knowledge of them whatever. His blank look of wondering interest testified to that.

“Then I will tell you a little, a very little, about them,” said Mr. Midas. Here his face began to take on that far-away expression which it had before worn; but this was only for a moment. Then he resumed:—

“There are three other realms or kingdoms below this one. The lowest one of all is the iron realm. I was never there but once; the creatures who live and work there are so wild and terrible to look upon, and speak so harsh and grating a jargon, that one’s senses are pained. The next realm above the iron one is that of copper and brass. I have never fairly entered that one at all; for those brass and copper people keep up such a tremendous noise that any one but themselves would be killed by it. Next above the

brass realm comes the silver realm. I have been in that kingdom often. It is very pleasant, very pleasant. But there is little or no work done by the silver people. They spend most of the time in talking; their language is very sweet and their voices are very soft. The people of this kingdom despise them, because they so often ask for aid to complete their work; and from hearing them talk so much and work so little, the people here have come into the way of saying nothing at all, but they work the harder to make up. Perhaps you may have heard the expression, 'Speech is silver, but silence is golden.' That is another of the maxims which the people above have borrowed from us. There are many surprising things I could tell you about the lower kingdoms, but the most surprising of them all is —"

At this point in the narrative something happened which interrupted it; and as Tommy afterward forgot to ask about this "most surprising thing," he never learned what it was.

The interruption came in the sounding of a sweet-toned bell from some point back of the throne and

the king ; at once, on hearing it, Mr. Midas leaped up with great alacrity, seized Tommy by the hand, Tommy caught up Jock by the arm, and all three hurried down from the steps of the throne and stood facing it, about a dozen paces away.

“ I am so glad you will be able to see it,—I am so glad,” exclaimed Mr. Midas, with expressions of delight.

“ So am I,” assented Tommy. “ Will it be very nice and strange ? ”

“ Very nice and strange indeed,” said the other. “ In one minute you will see a very strange sight.”

As he spoke he kept his gaze fixed upon the figure of the king, so bright and so full of joints ; and Tommy, not knowing what else to do, directed his gaze toward the same object.

Thus they paused. A few seconds passed, and again the bell sounded. At this second signal a beautiful smile crept over the face of the king, then he bowed his head gently on his breast, and *then* — his whole body bowed forward, and all the joints, down to the very tiniest, became unjointed, and in a mass of golden splendor, in a shower of radiance,

the king came to the throne-floor, a great heap of gold ingots, that covered the top and flowed down even to the iron step.

It was indeed a sight to be long remembered; but Tommy had no time to ask about it just then, for from all sides came Pounds, hurrying, yet in utter silence, and began gathering up and bearing away the gold ingots. There were very many ingots, but there were also very many Pounds; and the work was rapidly carried on. Tommy looked at them for a minute or two, and then turned toward his companion. "What a sad, sad fate!" was all he could say, thinking of the poor king.

"Not at all! not at all!" replied Mr. Midas, cheerfully. "In the foundry hall they had unexpectedly gotten out of gold, and the king was merely ready to give himself for his people; he was a true king, and a true king must always be ready to do that. Once we had a king who was not of the purest gold, and he wouldn't sacrifice himself for his subjects, no matter how great their need might be. So he stayed and stayed on the throne, and grew tarnished and

corroded, and his joints stuck fast together, and at last he became quite blind and helpless. Since then our kings have had less and less base metal in them, — that is to say, they have been made of purer and purer gold; and the purer they are, the easier the joints come apart. Now, one moment more and you will see the new king.”

As he spoke, the last one of the ingots was gathered up, the last one of the industrious Pounds bore it away, the throne was moved, by some hidden power, to one side, and — again the sweet-toned bell sounded. Then came a great change; the rocky wall, just behind the throne, opened from top to bottom, each half moved aside, and behind this rocky wall was disclosed another throne and another king precisely like the first. . Then a chorus of voices rang out from the distance, sounding like a chime, “The king never dies; live the king!”

That was the whole of it; it all seemed to come out right enough, but Tommy could not help feeling sorry for the former king.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MUSEUM.



“COME, Tommy,” said Mr. Midas, still smiling with pleasure at having been able to show him the change in sovereigns, “come and let us look at some of the other interesting sights; there are more of them in this underground kingdom than I can show you during

“Come, Tommy, and let us look at some of the other interesting sights.”

this your first visit, but you may come again; now let us look at 'The Museum.'"

Thus speaking, he led Tommy and Jock toward the left, across the Central Hall; but a moment later he drew the little boy hastily back. "Wait one moment," said he, "or we may be run over!"

Tommy shrank back and kept close by his side, while a wretched-looking beast, a knock-kneed horse, came hobbling by, laden with huge bags and bundles, and driven by some shrill-voiced Pennies, while just behind followed two or three Pounds. The sorry creature bore her burdens with difficulty, but the Pennies struck her at times, and urged her on.

"That's the only beast of burden we have here," remarked Mr. Midas; "and I tell them that they make her work too hard, quite too hard."

Then, turning to Tommy, he said: "You may never have seen her before, but I'm sure you have heard of her. You have often heard, haven't you, of 'money making the mare go'? Well, that is the mare; and as you can see, she is compelled to go, whether she wishes to or not." The child had seen a great many

horses, but never such a pitiable creature as this; and he ventured to say as much. "Very likely, very likely!" nodded his companion. "She is a sorry beast, is the mare that money makes go; and I wish that all men could know it, as you do. Here we are, though, near the entrance of the Museum."

Some one had preceded them, and was just entering as they came up. He stopped for a moment at a table just outside the doorway, and after doing something which Tommy could not distinguish, passed on into the hall. When the two, in their turn, came near, the little boy was eager to see what was on this table; but only by standing on his tiptoes could he look over the edge.

There on the table, made of glittering silver that reflected Tommy's face as well as a mirror could have done it, lay a penny stretched out, flat on his back, with eyes closed, and apparently asleep.

Asleep he was, indeed; for as he felt the table jostle he started up, opened his eyes, rubbed them a little with his knuckles, which were brass, and then lay perfectly still, as if waiting for Tommy to do some



"You have often heard of 'money making the mare go.' Well, that's the mare ;  
and as you can see, she is compelled to go, whether she wishes to or not."

*Page 47*

thing. But Tommy knew not what he was expected to do.

“Turn him!” directed Mr. Midas, “turn him over!”

The boy was at first timid, and hesitated, but a look at the Penny reassured him; for the Penny smiled and then grinned, —if not from ear to ear, at least from edge to edge.

So Tommy boldly took the Penny by an arm and a leg, and turned him over upon his face. No sooner was he fairly over than he sprang back to his former position, closed his eyes, and before Tommy could wink his own eyes twice, was breathing heavily, wrapped in slumber.

“Come! we may go in now,” said Mr. Midas. “I’ll tell you about it as we go. It’s an old, old custom of ours. We call it ‘turning an honest penny.’ You noticed how very clear and bright that penny was. Very good! He is our standard penny; he has full weight, and is absolutely without flaw or stain. Everybody who goes in or passes near him, turns him. He becomes a little weary of this; but then he has a great deal of time to himself, and, being without any duties, he devotes the larger part of it to sleep.”

The two had now passed within the Museum door; and Tommy not only gazed eagerly about him, but held up Jock that he too might see. There were so many, many objects to draw the little boy's attention that, like most sight-seers, he hardly saw anything clearly. Very likely he would have remained rooted to the spot in helpless astonishment if Mr. Midas had not taken him by the arm and led the way about the hall, explaining the curiosities as they walked.

“Some of these objects, which we preserve so carefully,” said the little man, pointing proudly about the walls with his staff, — “some of these objects are really valuable in themselves, and some are valuable only for the associations they have. There, for example, is the ‘Crooked Sixpence’ that was found by the Crooked Man under the Crooked Style. You surely have heard of that?”

“Indeed I have,” exclaimed Tommy, with delight. “My mamma read it to me once out of the ‘Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes.’”

“Certainly; you are quite right,” responded the other, gravely. “Now that sixpence is valuable, not of itself,

but because it reminds one of what can be done by perseverance ; the little ‘ Crooked Man’s ’ perseverance was very commendable. He has gone to the bad, though, since then. It is n’t a very long way to the bad, either ; but short as it is, there are many places along it where one can easily lose his money. And the Crooked Man lost his Crooked Sixpence, after he had searched for it so long. One of our people found it again, however, and brought it here, where we keep it safely locked up in this glass case.”

There was so much to see that the two did not pause long at any one place. Mr. Midas was very obliging, and answered all the questions that Tommy could ask, which were many.

“ What is *that* ? ” inquired the boy for the fiftieth time, pointing toward a straight bar of gleaming gold which hung against the wall on one side, and was inscribed with many letters and words in a language strange to Tommy.

“ That is the Golden Rule, my dear child,” answered Mr. Midas. “ It came from far away in the East. It is marked with mystic sentences and magic symbols.



“There, for example, is the ‘Crooked Sixpence.’ You surely have heard of that?” — Page 51.

It came down from heaven, they say ; and it stayed among men only a brief time. Wicked magicians and crafty sages tried very hard to change its shape and to cheapen it with baser metals, but all in vain ; it kept its purity and its perfect form. Then they threw it away and forgot all about it. So we brought it down here. We don't expect to keep it here always, though. When men grow better, the word will come and we shall send it back among them."

The little man's voice grew sad as he spoke these last words in a subdued way, and Tommy was almost sorry that he had asked about the Golden Rule ; but Mr. Midas quickly recovered himself, and they resumed their walk, coming at each step upon some new wonder.

Finally, when the tour of the marvellous Museum was about completed, Mr. Midas stopped Tommy in front of a beautifully inlaid case, in which, upon a velvet cushion, were lying a number of silver coins. "I fancy you could not by any chance guess what they are, could you ?" inquired Mr. Midas, looking at the boy ; "perhaps you could, though, if you were to count them."

Tommy certainly could not guess, and he could not see what was to be gained by counting them. Still, he followed the suggestion, and began: "One, two, three—" and so on. He found some difficulty as he went on, but at last he made his way through "eighteen" and "nineteen," and came to "twenty."

"There are twenty, please," he announced doubtfully.

"That is quite right," said Mr. Midas, with an approving smile. "There are just twenty. Now does that number help you to come near the guess?"

Tommy shook his curly head in a perplexed way. He had no idea what Mr. Midas meant.

"Twenty pieces of silver," said Mr. Midas,— "twenty pieces of silver." And he repeated it in a suggestive way.

Still Tommy was without any clew.

"I am sure you know, Tommy," said he, kindly persisting, "if you only try to remember. Who was sold into Egypt? It must be that you have —"

"Oh, I know, I know!" exclaimed Tommy, with delight. "It was Joseph. His cruel brothers sold him for twenty pieces of silver." And the laugh began to

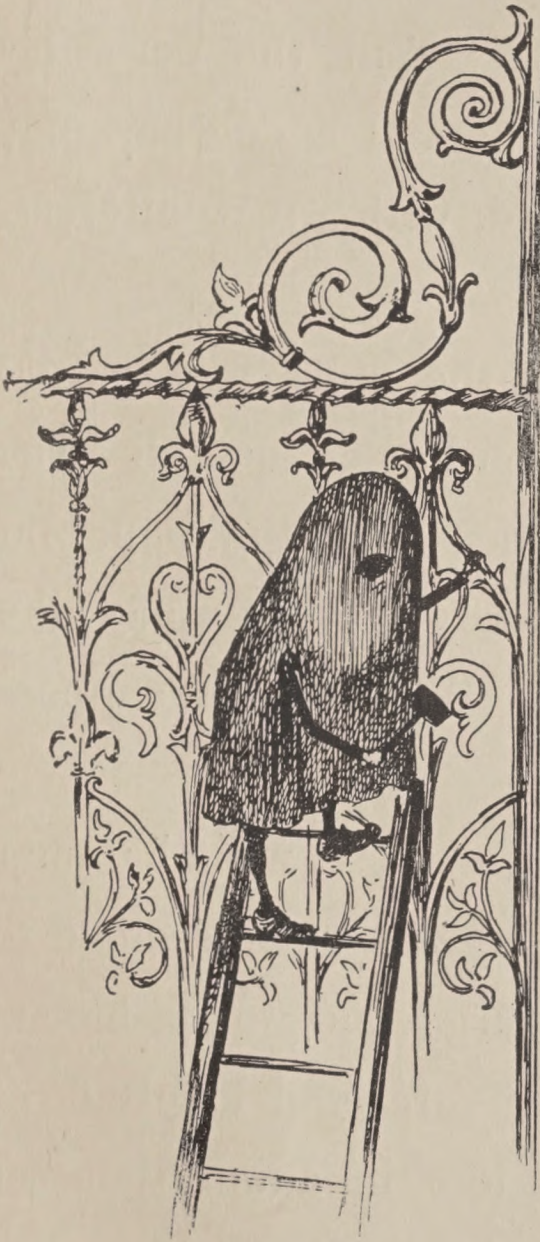
fade on his red little lips, as he thought of the sad story about the young lad sent away as a slave among the Midianite traders.

His good friend was clearly pleased that he had recalled it; and the two stood gazing at the silver pieces for several minutes in silence. Then, as they turned away, Mr. Midas put his hand on Tommy's shoulder, and his face wore a stern and pained expression. "Tommy," said he, "we have other pieces of silver, *thirty* in number; but no one looks upon them; they are shown to nobody. They are stained and discolored beyond all our powers to purify them; stained with the blood of an Innocent One, Tommy, who dwelt among men ages ago."

Then the two passed out in silence, hand in hand, from the Museum.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HALL OF FURNACES.



“Tommy looked, and saw a Pound  
busy with a hammer.”

SEVERAL minutes passed before either Tommy or Mr. Midas spoke. Then the boy, recalling the many objects of beauty and interest in the museum, murmured under his breath, “Oh, it was just wonderful and lovely!”

Mr. Midas seemed to be pleased with the childish sincerity of the exclamation, and said, “We will now go to the hall where the gold ore is melted and run into ingots, and the coins are moulded. Do you think you can bear a good deal of noise?”

Tommy smiled, in a somewhat shamefaced way. His mamma had so often told him he made more noise than she could endure. "Will it be a very, very loud noise?" he asked critically.

"Indeed it will," responded Mr. Midas.

Tommy was silent a moment. "Will the noise be louder than a tin-pan, and a drum, and a dog barking, and a whistle blowing?" he asked, with great interest, recalling his own achievements.

Mr. Midas smiled fondly upon the child, and patted him on the head. "It will be even louder than all that. But we are yet at a little distance from the hall, and there are a few things along this way that you may like to see. There is something now! What do you suppose that Pound is doing?"

Tommy looked, and saw a Pound busy, with hammer and other tools, upon an immense gate, which seemed to be made all of gold. It was very large, and was fashioned most beautifully, having graceful figures and lovely faces worked into it. The boy was lost in admiration for several minutes; then his good friend aroused him with the question, "Did you ever see that before?"

Tommy had become so used to confessing ignorance about these wonderful objects in the Kingdom of Coins, that he answered very readily, "No, Mr. Midas, if you please."

"Ah! humph!" ejaculated Mr. Midas, making-believe frown, and putting on a droll expression. "You've never seen it? What, pray, is your hour for rising in the morning?"

Tommy's mind was very clear on that painful point. "If you please, it's seven in summer and eight in winter."

"Oh! ah! That accounts for your not knowing what that gate is. That is one of the "Golden gates of Morn." A great many people sing pretty songs about those gates who never set eyes on them, not once. The sun comes through them at least an hour before you are up. Splendid works of skill they are, but they will get out of order a little at times. It may be that a hinge gets clogged; or, the sun strikes against them some morning when he's a little late and in a hurry; and then there is no help for it, but they must come here to be repaired. That's not so easy a matter to arrange, either, because they

can't be spared long at a time ; though when the weather is cloudy it's no matter, you see, if they're not in place, — no one would notice."

Tommy lingered awhile, watching the industrious Pound ; then he turned and hurried after his companion, whispering to Jock meanwhile that it would be pretty bad to be lost in this confusing world. As they proceeded, — the three, — sounds came more and more distinctly to Tommy's ear, which he knew must proceed from the hall containing the furnaces and hammers. The noise increased as they drew nearer, the clinking and clanking grew louder and louder, and Tommy tightened his grasp of Mr. Midas's hand.

"Let's stand a moment or two at the entrance," said Mr. Midas, "until your ears become used to the noise."

Tommy was nothing loath, and they both stepped toward one side of the doorway, just in time to allow a group of Pounds to pass, each bearing a tray heaped up with coins.

They were not new coins, Tommy was sure ; for they were all more or less discolored, and some were tarnished so much that they looked like clay coins. "Those are

going to be re-cast," said Mr. Midas. "Watch the Pounds and you will see."

Sure enough, the trays were taken in turn to the door of a furnace, and emptied into it. "Those are all coins that have been used for dishonest purposes while in the world," continued the little man. "They are collected and brought here to be made pure again."

Tommy's eyes were roving very rapidly over the many curious and almost alarming sights presented to him. He saw a row of huge furnaces ranged along one side of the hall, and when one of their doors was opened it almost blinded him; but he learned to look quickly away, and his ears were now becoming used to the mighty roar of the hammers, so that he felt less timid.

These hammers were many times larger than any sledge-hammer that Tommy had ever seen; and they moved regularly, by some unseen machinery. There were Pounds busy everywhere about the hall; and how they ever could avoid all the terrible hammers, and not fall into the fierce furnaces, was a wonder to Tommy. Presently his glance fell upon a row of boys—at least they seemed to be boys—about equal in age to himself,

standing in a line near one of the gigantic hammers. He asked Mr. Midas if he might move a little nearer, in order to see what they were doing. Soon he saw that at each blow of the hammer a piece of red-hot metal was formed into a coin ; and as soon as the hammer rose in the air for the next blow, the boy next the hammer caught up the hot coin from the anvil eagerly, made a wry face, opened his mouth as though he were crying " Oh ! " quickly passed the coin to the next boy, and then waited just as eagerly for the next blow of the hammer to fashion another coin. The boy next him, in his turn, caught at the coin as it was passed to him, did just the same things the first boy did, and then passed it along down the line.

Surely no stranger thing than that was ever seen by any one before. So Tommy thought. " Do please explain, Mr. Midas ! " he called out, trying to be heard above the incessant roar.

Whether or not Mr. Midas heard him is a question, but he knew perfectly well what the inquiry was ; and he put his mouth close up to the child's ear and shouted, " Those boys are learning a lesson."

Having waited a moment for Tommy to give proper attention, he continued: "They are learning a lesson here which they would not learn at home of their mammas. They are boys who never could keep a penny,



"They are boys who never could keep a penny, but spent it directly they received it."

but spent it directly they received it; it burned their fingers and their pockets, as the saying is. So they are learning to hold coins firmly, even if they do burn a little."

He was looking somewhat sternly and meaningly at Tommy. Tommy reflected that, for his part, he preferred

to learn that lesson at home. Then he raised his hand, opened it, and disclosed the penny still held tightly therein. The little man smiled approvingly; and Tommy secretly resolved inside his curly head, that when he returned home he would not buy candy with the penny, as he had planned, but would put it into his bank.

He now let his glance wander down the row of boys until it rested upon the last one. This boy, as soon as he received the coin from the hand of his neighbor, tossed it several yards away toward a group of creatures that looked, not like Pounds, but like men.

The two moved cautiously along to obtain a nearer view of these objects; and Tommy decided that they were old and gray men, with faces as dark as leather. They appeared to be sitting, Turk-fashion, upon their crossed legs; and, what was queer enough to Tommy's mind, they were waiting, each with mouth wide open, to catch the coins tossed to them by the last boy of the row. They were very dexterous, and their mouths were enormously large, from stretching them so much; so that, no matter how carelessly the boy tossed the coin, some one of them always caught it.



“Each with mouth wide open, to catch the coins. . . . Then he saw a Pound approach, take one of these creatures by his ears, and lift him.” — *Page 64.*

Tommy watched them very curiously and yet not without pity. "What did they do with all the coins?" and "How could they possibly hold so many, to say nothing of catching them?"

Then he saw a Pound approach, take one of these creatures by his ears, as if by handles, and — lift him as easily as he would a feather, and set him down in another place, a few feet distant.

It was a little clearer now; for the creature was evidently only a shell, like paper or leather, and where he had been sitting, was now a heap of gold as large as he had himself been, all nicely piled in rolls and ready to move away. Indeed, that was just what the Pound did. The gold was already on a low dray with very small wheels; and Tommy saw it wheeled away, while all the time the strange creatures went on catching the flying coins.

He would never have been able to understand this by himself; but Mr. Midas shouted to him that these were the skins of misers, — all that was left of them when they died, — flesh and soul all gone, only the skin left, and an awful hunger for gold.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TREASURE HALL.



The Spendthrifts.

HERE does the Pound carry the gold?" inquired the child, as another miser-shell was lifted and another load of gold wheeled away.

"We will follow," said Mr.

Midas, "and we shall come into still another hall, where you will see more gold than you ever dreamed about."

So the two followed carefully after the Pound, and soon passed, under a low rocky archway, into this treasure hall.

As they entered it, Mr. Midas's face broke into a broad smile, which he tried to conceal with his hand, at the same time saying in a sharp tone, "There you are, you naughty Penny, at it again! Stop it now! Stop it, I say! Why will you waste your time in such pranks, cutting pigeon-wings and keeping up all those antics?"

As he spoke, trying to make his tone as severe as he could, Tommy saw a most frolicsome Penny leaping and turning somersaults, — cutting pigeon-wings, as Mr. Midas called it, — doing all such monkey-like tricks with the most astonishing ease and rapidity. "Oh, that idle, mischievous Penny!" said Mr. Midas. "We put him here to keep watch in this hall, but he is so active and irresponsible that he is very little to be depended on."

The Penny at once put on a most serious face, ceased his antics, and made way for them; so they passed in. Certainly Tommy had never dreamed of such heaps and heaps of gold. It was piled up in great cubes and pyramids, and the sides of the hall were hidden from view as high as Tommy could see. Indeed, the quantity of shining gold was so great that no lights at all were

needed, and one's eyes were dazzled by the gleaming golden lustre all about.

In addition to the gold itself, there were one or two novel sights which attracted Tommy's attention as soon as he recovered from his first astonishment. One of these was a cage, like a cage for wild beasts at the menagerie, which stood half concealed behind a projecting ledge of rock. Yes, and there were some strange creatures in it too; Tommy saw them move.

Of course he wished to go nearer; and his companion readily complied. But what was Tommy's surprise and dismay to discover that they were human beings, — men! They made no sound, they were dressed like ordinary men, but they seemed very restless, and eager to get out.

“What have they done?” asked Tommy, with pity in his voice. “Have they killed anybody?”

“By no means!” was the reply, in cheerful tones. “Still,” — and his voice grew serious, — “they are not blameless persons; they have done wrong. It doesn't seem very wrong to them, but it is. They are spend-thrifts, — people who wasted their money, who flung it away without any thought of the future. We have a

record of the life of each of them; and we find that when they were children, they no sooner laid hands on a penny than they ran as fast as they could to spend it. Two of them were once here to learn the same lesson that is being learned by that row of boys in the other hall; but they forgot it after they went back into the world, and they grew worse and worse as they increased in years."

"Don't you ever let them out?" inquired Tommy. "What would they do if you tried them once?"

"No, indeed!" responded Mr. Midas, grimly. "No, we don't let them out. Once in a great while they get out themselves; and when they do, they cause more harm than a hundred mischievous Pennies."

"Oh dear! what do they do?" asked Tommy anxiously, glancing at the cage with fear. "Do they eat people up?"

"Hardly that!" replied Mr. Midas, repressing a smile. "Indeed, how could they? All these people, Pennies and Pounds alike, would be pretty hard to eat. No, they don't hurt anybody; but at the time when they escaped, they did just what you would have expected

from their natures, — they ran straight to these heaps of gold coins, and for hours and hours they flung them about, in every direction. It was a pretty spectacle, I can assure you, when the Pound who has this hall in charge came back. Hundreds and thousands of the coins were scattered about loosely on the floor.”

Mr. Midas shook his head in angry memory of the disorder.

“That was too bad,” said Tommy, with sympathy; “and it must have been such a piece of work to put them all back.”

“Oh, as for that matter,” remarked the other, smiling again, “it was n’t so very difficult. We just directed a half-dozen of those miser-shells to be brought in and placed about the hall, and then ordered the spendthrifts to continue their action, but to fling about only the coins already lying on the floor in disorder. As soon as they did this, and the coins began to fly about, they were very soon captured by the miser-shells, who, as you saw with your own blue eyes, are very skilful.”

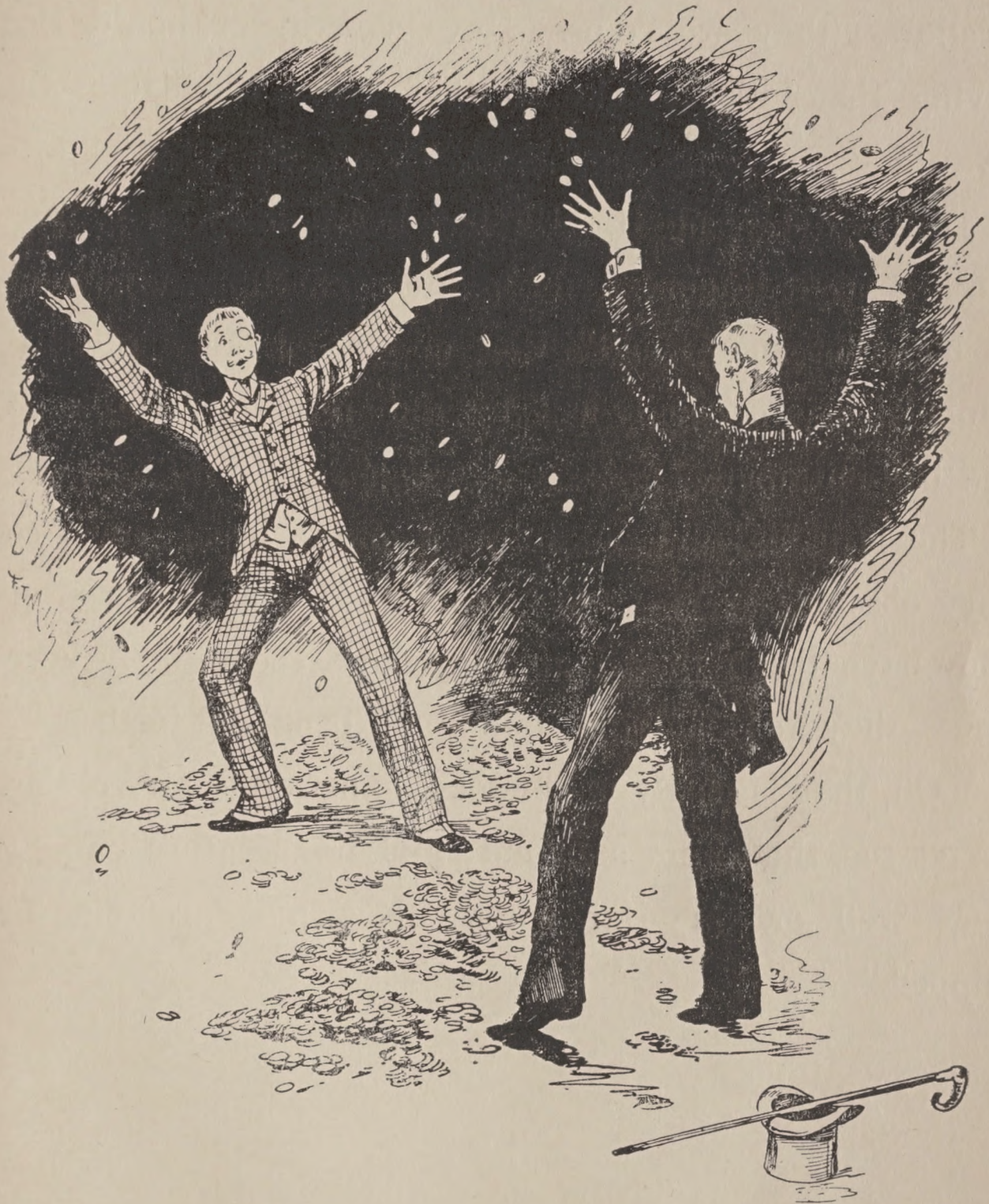
As Mr. Midas was relating this interesting anecdote, he was leading the way slowly along the hall. Presently,

as they rounded a mighty column of coins stacked up until they were like a pier supporting the roof, they came upon a few persons, men and women, lying in various postures among some smaller piles of coins, evidently fast asleep, and each one with a very complacent smile upon his face.

Tommy looked wonderingly at them a moment or two, but Mr. Midas drew him along. "Never mind about them!" said he, with contempt. "They are very unpleasant people, the Purse-Proud family. They claim to be descended from the old French line of the 'Nouveaux Riches.' They have neither beauty nor brains, and are quite content to lie here day after day, among these piles of gold. We won't wait to look at them, but if you will come into the next hall we shall see something more worthy our attention."

"If you please, Mr. Midas," said Tommy, lingering a moment, "what are those bright things that fly about like birds? Are they really birds? They shine like gold."

"Ah, I omitted to speak of them," responded his kind companion, "though I ought not to have done so.



“For hours and hours the spendthrifts flung them about.” — *Page 71.*

Those are not birds, though they do look a little like swallows; they are coins. Have you never heard the saying that 'Riches take to themselves wings and fly away'?"

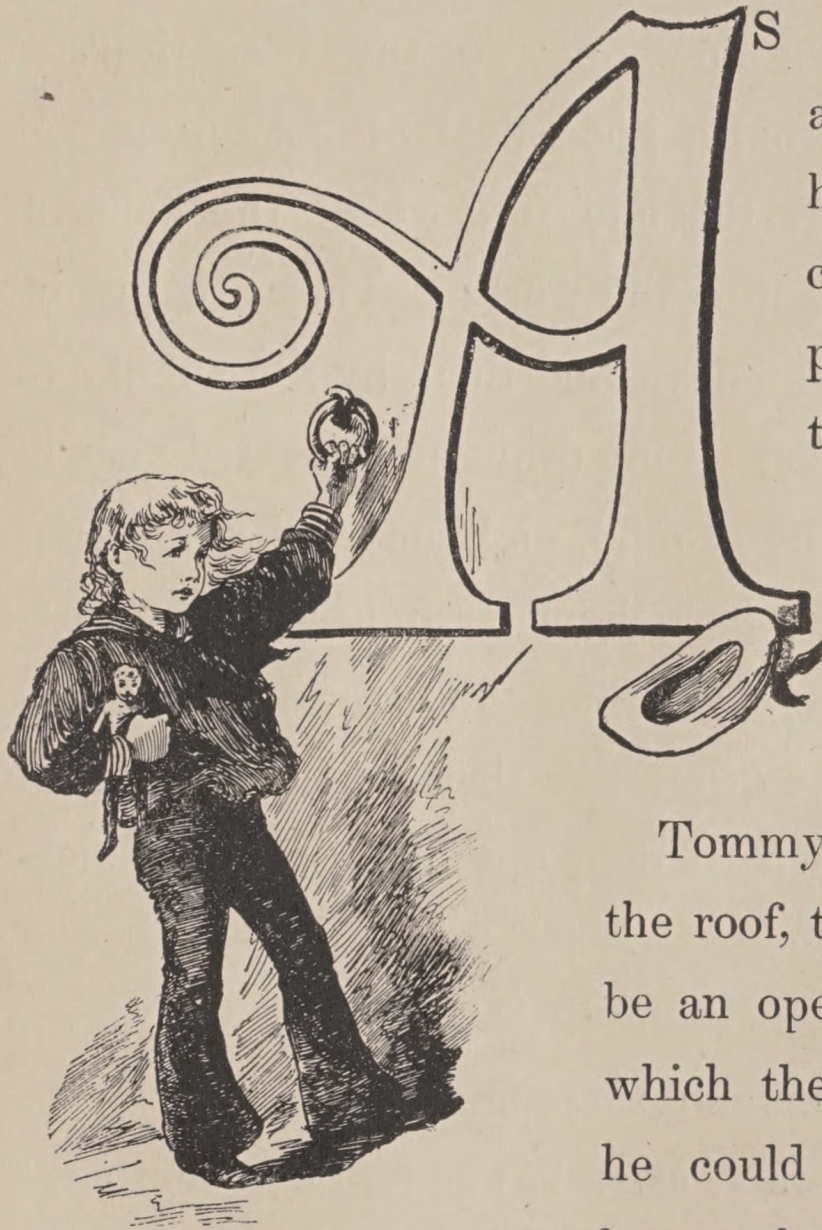
Tommy did recall it. He had heard his wise grandmother say it often. And Mr. Midas carefully explained to him that the "wings" thus taken were the "pigeon-wings" so unceasingly cut by the frolicsome Penny at the hall-entrance.

The little boy did not fully grasp the idea; it was so very obscure. "Yes," said he, "I—I—see; but after they have taken the wings, they don't seem to fly very far,—they go round and round, and back and forth."

"Oh, that is easily understood," answered Mr. Midas. "You see the wings are 'cut,' and no creature can fly very well or very far when his wings are cut or clipped."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE RETURN HOME.



“Cautioning Tommy to hold fast to a ring, that he might not be blown away.”

As they came nearer and nearer the next hall, a sound of machinery could be plainly heard, and there was also a good deal of motion in the air, as if a breeze were blowing.

Tommy looked up toward the roof, thinking there might be an opening there, through which the breeze came; but he could see none, and the breeze became stronger and stronger. Soon the open archway of the hall could be seen,

and through it some Pounds were carrying loads of coin.

“ I think we shall not be able to go in very far,” said Mr. Midas, as they approached the doorway. “ The chimneys are in use now, and, do the best they can, our people cannot avoid a good deal of boisterous wind. You see, this hall is the one into which the coins are taken to be sent up into the world. They are put into those cone-shaped chimneys, and then, by the aid of powerful machinery, a very strong draught is created that lifts them far up above the ground, and they fall again to the earth, where men can pick them up and use them.”

“ Yes, I understand,” assented the little boy. “ I heard our man Jim say the other day that he had been doing odd jobs around town all day, but he had only ‘ picked up ’ a very little money.”

“ Precisely ! ” nodded the little old man. “ You are very quick to understand these matters.”

“ Only,” said Tommy, after a moment’s reflection, “ I don’t quite see how you can scatter them far enough away from the chimneys, so that they will fall where all the men are ; you know some people live in China.”

“Precisely!” repeated Mr. Midas, — for it was a favorite word with him, — “Precisely!” Then he knitted his brows a moment and said, “You have heard about the earth, — how it turns round and round like a top, only more slowly?”

Tommy had a faint idea that he had heard something about it.

“Precisely! Now all we have to do is to vary the distance we will send them up. You see the earth turns around under them while they are in the air; and if they are far up, it turns more than when they go up only a short distance; so that they fall down near by if they go up a little, and far away if they go very high. It’s an easy matter to drop them in China.”

This was certainly as good an explanation as a reasonable boy could have expected; and Tommy, being a reasonable boy, asked no further questions, but contented himself with gazing at the active scenes within the hall.

As the three stood there, — Mr. Midas, Tommy, and Jock, — a Pound came hurrying up to Mr. Midas, and said he was very much needed in the Furnace Hall,

where one of the boys in the row at the anvil had been suddenly taken ill. Tommy said he could perfectly well remain alone for a short time; and Mr. Midas departed, first cautioning him to hold fast to a ring that was set into the rocky side of the archway, so that he might not be blown away.

At first Tommy found the time not at all heavy on his hands, for there was much to see. There was a great deal of machinery in the hall, wheels and belts and great fans; and the Pounds were busily moving about, carrying the gold and tossing it into the great doors of the huge cones, each of which was the base of a chimney.

After several minutes had elapsed, Tommy grew curious to go a little nearer the cones and see, if he could, what was inside them. He remembered the parting injunction of Mr. Midas, however, and kept his place a little while longer.

Then it happened that a stronger draught than usual caught off his hat and whirled it a few yards away, where it lodged in a piece of unused machinery. "What should he do?" At first he hesitated. Then he resolved that he would try to regain it. He said to himself, — making

a little excuse, as he remembered Mr. Midas's words, — “I can just creep along on my hands and knees. If those Pounds can walk upright as easily and steadily as they do, I'm sure I'll be safe enough creeping.”

Alas for Tommy ! Better would it have been for him, far better, if he had strictly heeded the advice given so kindly by Mr. Midas. I am sure he would have heeded it, if only he had paused a moment and reflected how much older than himself his kind friend and guide was. He trusted, however, too confidently in his own judgment ; and he forgot, in comparing himself with the Pounds, that they were made of metal, and were very much heavier than he was. He loosened his hold on the ring, and leaned forward to fall upon his hands and knees. Then there suddenly came a great gust of wind, and rolled him over and over, straight toward the open door of one of the huge cones.

Tommy was terribly frightened, you may be sure ; but he was not in the least hurt, and he clung tightly to Jock and to the Penny which his mother had given him.

Straight toward the open door he was swept ; yes, and

into it, — into it like a feather; and then Tommy heard a great roaring noise, and closed his eyes, and then —

Then he opened his eyes again, and where do you suppose he found himself? He found that he was back on the doorstep of his own home. Yes, there he was, just as if he had not been away at all. He rubbed his eyes and looked at Jock for an explanation; but Jock would not give any opinion in the matter. Then he looked at the penny. There it was, tightly clasped in his hand. He looked at it closely for a moment. “I’m so glad there is n’t any stain on it,” said he, with a sigh of relief. “If there were, I should be sure that it had been used for dishonest purposes.”

Tommy sat several minutes longer in a perplexed state of mind. He tried to think his mind clear and straight; but it seemed very confused and tangled, and little wonder that it was, with so many strange things happening so close together. There was the gate where the queer little man had first presented himself, with his staff and bells; but the little man himself was no longer there.

“I don’t understand it,” murmured Tommy, rubbing his eyes yet again; “I don’t understand it at all.”



“He was back on the doorstep of his own home. . . . ‘I don’t understand it,’ murmured Tommy, rubbing his eyes yet again; ‘I don’t understand it at all.’” — *Page 80.*

Then a kind voice from within the house called, "Tommy, Tommy, you must certainly come in out of the hot sun. I do believe you have been asleep."

So Tommy arose, took faithful Jock under his arm and the penny in his hand, and went into the house.

















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